BOTANICAL GAZETTE.

Vol. 2. SEPTEMBER, 1877. *No. 11.*

Poisonous properties of the Leguminosæ.—*Leguminosæ* from being once regarded as almost wholly innocent of poisonous properties, now comes to be considered as among the chief of sinners. Following hard upon each others heels come charges of damage to stock from *Oxytropis Lamberti* in Colorado; *Hosackia Purshiana* in Arizona; and two or three species of *Astragalus* in California. As if to complete the bad record against the order, Prof. H. C. Wood, M. D., has just published in the Philadelphia Medical Times, for August 4th, 1877, an account of a new and exceedingly poisonous alkaloid discovered by himself in the bean of *Sophora speciosa*. This he properly names *Sophoria*. It appears to act as a spinal sedative. "One-twentieth of a grain, of a very imperfect specimen, produced in a half grown cat deep sleep lasting many hours, and "the minutest speck of it produced in two minutes almost entire paralysis in the frog." In fact it has some striking points of resemblance to the action of Calabar Bean, of which it is a near relative. Mr. Bellinger, of Texas, states that the Indians, chewing half a bean, go off into "hilarious intoxication," followed by a sleep of a couple of days, and that dangerous symptoms are likely to follow the use of an entire bean. It is fortunate that the investigation of this drug has fallen into the hands of so competent and conscientious an investigator as Dr. Wood, as we may promise ourselves that in his "findings" crude guesses will not be reckoned as established truths.—Dr. J. T. Rothrock.

Shipping Live Plants.—On page 107 of the Botanical Gazette is noticed the sending of a suite of American plants by myself to the Botanical Garden of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. They were packed in wet sphagnum, in a tight wine cask, and sent to San Francisco, to expedite their transit. The venture proved a failure, as the plants mostly softened on the way. On the 9th of May last, I tried another venture. This suite consisted of the new *Nymphæa* from Florida, *N. lutea*, *N. odorata*, *Helonias bullata*, *Erythronium Americanum*, *Claytonia Virginica*, the new *Amarylli Atamasco (?)*, *Thalictrum anemonoides*, *Pyxidanthera barbulata*. I procured plastic clay, and moistened it so that it could be conveniently worked in the hand. A wine cask was again used, and every root was compactly surrounded with the clay—it being packed in well, and hard with sand. I have to day, under date of June 28, received a letter from the director, Mr. Charles Moore, which to my joy, announces the arrival of the plants in the best condition, except the *Pyxidanthera*, which I should say was in poor state before the packing. Mr. Moore's words are: "The first trial was a failure. The second has been attended with the most perfect success, as the rhizomes of *Nymphæa lutea* and *N. odorata* are as fresh as when packed for transmission to this place. I am also much pleased to inform you that with the exception of one kind, *Pyxidanthera*, which is dead, all the other plants sent with the Nymphæas are alive."

I think then that for living plants to be shipped on long voyages, moist clay must be regarded as the best packing material. When it is intended to send entire plants, the roots should be firmly packed in clay, and the upper parts embedded in dry moss or hay.—Samuel Lockwood, *Freehold, N. J., Aug.* 3, 1877.